
University College London

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Model

Find, Fund and Support

Starting Point

The UnLtd/HEFCE Programme has added to what was already a vibrant culture of social enterprise at UCL. This culture is defined by a commitment to evidence-based social innovation and problem-solving. It is no surprise, therefore, that UCL has been a leading institution supporting the transfer of technology and other university intellectual property into the social enterprise sector.

Delivery Approach

Coordinating and energising this work is a dedicated Social Enterprise Business Manager, Ana Lemmo Charnalia who is situated within the University's Knowledge Transfer Office, UCL Business PLC (UCLB). The intersection between university research and the social enterprise sector is a relatively new and growing field for researchers seeking to navigate this space and develop their own research-based social ventures. The support of an experienced Social Enterprise Business Manager is of undoubted value. Inspired by this example, other universities are now looking to create an equivalent position within their own Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer offices. Also reaching out to staff members is UCL's Knowledge Transfer Champion for Social Enterprise, Professor Muki Haklay. As an academic staff member, Muki is well-placed to understand the needs of socially entrepreneurial researchers. The UnLtd/HEFCE Programme has benefited greatly from such a strong academic and business perspective at UCL. In turn, the Programme has made additional funding and networks available to UCL's socially entrepreneurial researchers.

Outcomes and Impact

UCLB's expertise when it comes to supporting research-based social enterprises is working to the benefit, not only of students and staff within the University, but also to the wider higher education community. This was formalised recently with the publication of 'From Ideas to Social Enterprise: A Guide to Utilising University Intellectual Property for the Benefit of Society'. The guide, written by



UCL and UCLB, with the support of UnLtd and STORM® Skills Training CIC, is aimed at Knowledge Transfer Offices looking to develop their social enterprise support offers for researchers. By turning their learning experiences into an accessible package of tools and advice, UCL is helping to cultivate a social enterprise ecosystem within and outside of its immediate environment.

The Future

The Delivery Team will continue to explore different ways of attracting and supporting researchers who possess the knowledge and passion to turn their research into marketable social ventures. This will mean forging new partnerships, for example at a local government level, and creating a distinct Social Enterprise Knowledge Transfer Network, one which taps into, but also extends beyond UCL's existing commercial enterprise networks. The outcome, ultimately, will be to strengthen the social enterprise sector with a new wave of evidence-based products and services.
